

REMONSTRANCE

ADDRESSED TO THE LOWER ORDERS OF

Roman Catholics,

IN THE DIOCESS OF CLOYNE AND ROSS,

BY THE

REV. DOCTOR COPPINGER. K

MY DEAR DELUDED PEOPLE!

THE disturbances so extensively prevailing among you I have long deplored. I did not yet publicly address you, for however earnest my wishes to contribute an humble mite, towards the dispelling of this dreadful delusion, yet was I reluctantly deterred from even the attempt, because I was convinced that no arguments of mine were likely to dissuade you from it; so artfully were you circumvented by designing men; so fascinated by their extravagant representations, and so estranged from the most obvious principles of religion, of policy, and of common sense. For this reason, I determined to await the issue of that experience which now proclaims to you from every Province of the Kingdom, that you were cruelly deceived; that prospects of complicated falsehood were held out to you; that you were inveigled to a precipice, where destruction almost inevitable seems to be your doom.

Some Counties of this Kingdom have already yielded assent to these harsh lessons of experience: you my dear friends are equally interested in doing so: not one moment should be lost, there is no room

for hesitation: it is to accelerate this urgent resolution that I now address you, in the hope that promptings of the miseries of others, you will listen at length to what you have hitherto rejected; you will accord to the sense of your personal danger, what bare motives of religious and civil duty have not been able to extort from you. The most ignorant of the crowd must doubtless have been persuaded that Oaths subversive of all order, incompatible with the first principles of Society, with the acknowledged rights of individuals, under every regular government, were so many blasphemous outrages against the God of truth; which, as the *Supreme Ruler*, he is in a special manner pledged to punish. You were therefore fully convinced that while ever such guilt was persisted in, nor effaced by compunction and sincere conversion of heart, there could be no hope of ~~your salvation~~. Conscience had certainly condemned these enormities, it had often importuned you to desist; its voice was disregarded; but what conscience could not move you to, your own common sense, had you given yourselves time to consult it, would certainly have obtained from you. You would soon have discovered that all these projects, however invitingly represented, were both vain and impracticable; that the advantages proposed, were they within the reach of your exertions, could never be compensated by the horrors to be waded through in attaining to them.

Where this delusion originated is not mine to enquire: it seems envelopped in mystery, to unfold which a more extensive knowledge of the views of men and of the relative interests of those kingdoms, than I possess or aspire to, is requisite. I consider the matter merely with regard to yourselves, who are as little qualified to understand as I am to discuss a subject of such political intricacy. I shall accordingly confine myself to exposing to your view as well as I am able, and as briefly as possible, that the incentives employed to allure you into tumult, were all fallacious; that you were unfeelingly duped by agitators who looked

farther and aimed higher than you did, making tools of you for their own interested purposes; exciting you by hireling emissaries to acts of cruelty and outrage that the distracted state of the country might effect what some of them wished, or invite invasion, and weaken our means of defence. Though they had reason to suppose that numbers of you would forfeit liberty and even life in this subordinate treason; though the domestic happiness of thousands must in every event be sacrificed to their perfidious designs, they notwithstanding revelled in your destruction; they placed you like so many brute animals in the van of their career, unconcerned at the havock you are exposed to, while they themselves, in coward security, skulked behind until their object could more easily be come at.

To overturn the existing Government, or rather the Constitution of this Country, in order to substitute a foreign system in it's place, or possibly with other intentions best known to those who entertain them, it was necessary to engage the great mass of the People; whether by truth or by falsehood was of little moment; stir up the People was the word, no matter how this be accomplished. That the labouring part of the community could not be injured by a change, but that their condition might be easily meliorated; that they had toiled long enough to enrich others, that it was now full time to think of enriching themselves was a plausible argument; that the French were the patrons, the protectors of the People, that they would liberally reward their adherents amongst us, that the monopolists of property in this Kingdom were so many stock-holders, upon whom the enemy would draw at discretion in favour of the poor: that Farmers would become estated men, that Mechanics and Labourers would be enriched, and all in short be made happy.

In the large net of such lures, great numbers, as might well be supposed, were taken. Many still kept back, some of them through a sense of danger, some through a regard to religion, and some through both.

To the timid it was declared that secrecy should screen them; that the secret should be sealed by an oath; and the bond be still fortified by the tie of brotherhood. Should the cautious notwithstanding hesitate, aware of the rigour of the law, of the encouragement given to Informers and of the little confidence to be placed in this motly herd of associates, stronger incentives were at hand. The killing or the maiming of their cattle, proscription of themselves, instant death, or immediate danger of it, were to expel all lesser apprehensions. Threats of this sort were but too effectual, and numbers have been induced by them to adopt, what they since have had reason to shudder at. If a large portion of the crowd kept aloof, deterred by a regard for their religion; to gain these over, it was industriously circulated among them, that religion would flourish under these French evangelists; that they were the natural guardians of it, the head or foremost rank of the true believers. Though the Catholic Religion had been stifled by them in their own Country, in it's own blood; though they had unrelentingly massacred or expelled all it's Ministers, many of whom are this day supported by the bounty of Great Britain; though they had expunged the Lord's own Day even from their calendar, that not so much as this vestige of Christianity might remain among them; it was still impudently asserted it was still stupidly believed, that they loved their old religion and would fight for it amongst us. Though they had assaulted the Sovereign Pontiff in the very bosom of Catholicity; stripping him not only of his dominions, but of his necessary support, and reducing him to the degraded state of a mendicant exile, regardless of his venerable age, and of the general respect entertained for him by the other powers of Christendom; in Ireland these very men were to prove themselves his children; they were here to acknowledge his supremacy; to establish his Religion, in the full energy of their power.

Is not the bare mention of such extravagant assertions, an ample refutation of them? Don't you already feel yourselves duped? You were promised riches also, but poverty was prepared for you. Will hordes of greedy Invaders plunder the wealthy here to enrich you? Will the rapacious and unprincipled among yourselves, were you beforehand with the enemy, be left in quiet enjoyment of your ill-gotten spoil? What right can you acquire to what you would thus unjustly possess, which your poorer neighbour would not have to what he could take from you? Were all Ireland portioned out in equal divisions among foreign and domestic expectants, its extent would not afford each man as much as one acre; but were his share one hundred, what is his new estate without cultivation; and how can there be cultivation, where there are no tillers: and where shall you find tillers, if all become Gentlemen? Rank and Property must go hand in hand, and the inequality of both in every civilized Country must be as various as the talents of men. Were every individual in the land possessed at this day of an equal share of property, a lapse of twelve months would exhibit innumerable gradations. The industrious, the thrifty, the honest, the temperate, would soon surpass the idle, the profligate, the squanderers, and the licentious. In the general scale of human depravity, the latter description will be always the more numerous: the poor will still be the poor, under every form of Government: so that in whatever point of view you place the incentive of wealth as presented to your imaginations in the mere event of a change, you clearly discover its emptiness. Beside in grasping unjustly at what you had not, you either have lost or are likely to lose, what you were indisputably possessed of. The longer the Landlord and other legal Creditors are kept out of their respective demands, the heavier becomes the account against the day of reckoning. In the mean time that industry which was your resource,

being suspended or perhaps quite laid aside, no provision is made; the accumulated debt, with writs, ejectments, executions and the whole weight of the Law falls down inexorably upon you: your credit is lost, your character is gone: no alternative then remains, but to beg at liberty, or to die in confinement. A general combination among the tenantry of a kingdom, against the paying of rent, may answer the purposes of temporary confusion, but such a system cannot last long, no regular Government will ever sanction it. If the enemy were at this moment your Landlords, I will not ask you whether they would not require, and if necessary enforce at the point of the Bayonet the full payment of their rent; I will not ask you this, because you are convinced they would; but I will ask you whether you could ground any claim to their indulgence, upon your being able to tell them that you were long and heavily in Arrear to the former Proprietors? Would they not insist upon the more, in proportion as they should find that you had more to give them? If you are not certain they would, it is because your hurry did not allow you to ask yourselves that question.

The timid amongst you were promised the protection of secrecy. In this, as must always happen, where the crowd, the unprincipled, men, women, and children are intrusted, numbers were fatally deceived also. Of this you were warned to no purpose, you were repeatedly assured that to embark in this diabolical association, was to put your lives into the hands of those who proposed it to you. You were told, that casual disagreements, just demands of money due to you, the avarice, the treachery, the resentment or other evil dispositions of some of your associates, must indubitably expose you to detection. The Oath was your shelter and your shield—you trusted to it, but it has like every other item of this detested plan, proved treacherous and deceived you. The haunts of the most private Committees, have been discover-

ed; the proceedings in these Committees, the several measures adopted in them, with the persons most prominently concerned in these measures have been discovered also, and many who refused to believe that they would be thus betrayed, now feel to their cost, or have already felt, that they really were. The men most forward among you when mischief was to be executed, or broached, were the first underhand to sell their accomplices; those that were most active in proselyting you, most forward in urging you to acts of outrage, were the persons most likely to traffick in your blood, by venal treachery or purchased informations; because being more unprincipled, more profligate than the rest, they were the fittest tools of those base men, who would gull you to insurrection, for their own ambitious purposes, and stride forward to aggrandizement over *your* mangled carcases. So have their patrons done in France, by those who trusted them; so have they done in every other Country hitherto accursed by their destructive influence. If, therefore, no other motive urged you to withdraw from this odious combination, than the evidence it bears of the ruin intended you; were not conscience violated by it, in the breach of duty to your God, to your Country, and to your King; a King who has such claims upon our gratitude, our zeal, and our attachment; yet, when this combination counted upon you, as the ready tools of every villainous measure, exposing you, plunging you into ruin; you should abjure it with indignation, you should renounce it's society for ever. Consider, I beseech you, the devastation now spreading through this county; cast your eyes upon the several districts now smarting under military law; call to mind the desolated fields, the abandoned cottages, the ruined tenements, the cries of the fatherless, the widows, the unprotected; look a little farther at the more general carnage of the sword, of famine, of pestilence, so very likely to succeed a longer continuation of the present mischief; reflect, I say, seriously, upon all this

and prevent by an immediate return to your duty, the extending horrors that must otherwise overwhelm you. Come forth in a body, surrender your Arms, declare your detestation of what is past, throw yourselves upon the mercy of our Rulers, prove your sincerity by your conduct, rather than by your words; thus only can you expect forgiveness. But, should you persist in the measures I here deprecate, your repentance in that case will be bitter indeed, for it will be ineffectual, it will come too late. If I may yet flatter myself with any share in your esteem, if I may be allowed to hope that I have any weight with you, I conjure you in the name of God, to do forthwith what I now recommend to you: your eternal as well as your temporal interests are deeply concerned; the stake is immense, expose it no longer. To restore quiet to the country, comfort to the afflicted, support to the indigent, to obviate a deluge of distress depends in a great degree upon your decision at this moment. May the Almighty incline you to decide as you ought, and may his peace, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

P. S. After some copies of this Remonstrance had been struck off, it occurred on a review, that the virtues so emphatically ascribed to certain Senators, and the compliments they on that account received, might be considered by many, as extended to others of them by no means within my contemplation. The word *distinguished* and these discriminating virtues, though they selected them sufficiently in my own mind from others on the same side, might not have done so in the mind of a reader. To avoid being thus misunderstood; I have expunged that Paragraph; for it is my decided, my unalterable sentiment, that to be a Senator, without a virtuous attachment to the Constitution, is not to be an honest man.